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# Fisk University,

Nashville, Tenn.

Founded 1866.

Incorporated 1867.

James O. H. Smith



FISK MEMORIAL CHAPEL.

American Missionary Association,  
287 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.

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THE COLLEGIATE DEPARTMENT AND THE PRESIDENT AND PASTOR.

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## FISK UNIVERSITY AFTER THIRTY-NINE YEARS.

BY REV. J. G. MERRILL, D.D., PRESIDENT.

Ms. 36 Jan. 1912  
Fisk University was founded by the American Missionary Association in 1866. It was cradled in the army barracks that had been abandoned by the Federal army. It received its name from Gen. Clinton B. Fisk, who, at the time, was stationed at Nashville to close out United States Government affairs. At the very first, Chaplain Cravath, who was the President of Fisk for more than twenty-five years, announced that the institution would afford to the colored youth all the education they would show themselves able to acquire and make use of. This policy time has amply vindicated.

It soon became evident that the institution must find a new and permanent site. Fort Gillam, in the northwestern part of the city, was the location chosen. It is a commanding position and with its thirty-five acres of land affords an ideal campus. But how were the buildings to be erected? Prof. George E. White solved the problem by sending out a company of Jubilee Singers, as he christened them. They sang in all the northern States, in the British Isles, and on the continent of Europe. They were gone seven years and brought back to Fisk \$150,000, with which Jubilee Hall was builded, the balance due on the campus was paid, and the institution gained an international reputation.

Since these early days the school has moved forward with an even, constant growth. There are now upon its campus eight substantial, nearly all, commodious buildings. Its property is valued at \$350,000. It has an incipient endowment of about \$60,000. It catalogues over 500 students, of all grades, from the primary school, which is utilized as a "practice" school for the Normal Department, to the College Department, which last year enrolled nearly 100.

During its existence Fisk has sent out nearly 500 graduates from its Normal and College Departments. It keeps a close tally of its



REV. JAMES G. MERRILL, D.D.,  
*President of Fisk University.*



JUBILEE HALL.

Alumni, and is able to show that its graduates are working along the lines that they have been educated to follow to a larger extent than is true of institutions of like grade, north or south, where the student body is made up of Caucasians. The reason for this is apparent to those who recognize the inevitable working of the law of supply and demand. The vocations for which the Normal and College courses fit are not overcrowded in the case of the colored graduate, the demand for his services is far in excess of the supply, and must be for years to come. The social conditions of the South, separating the Negro from the Caucasian, afford the Negro an opportunity among his own that would have been denied him had he to come in competition with the educated white man. As teacher, doctor, lawyer, dentist, druggist, business man, educated farmer and clergyman, he cannot fail to secure a livelihood, and an opportunity to become a leader with large following. To read each year the revised roster of Fisk graduates is ample justification of the far-sighted statesmanship of its founders.

The curriculum of Fisk is such that its graduates from the College



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Department are admitted as post-graduates at Yale and Harvard without examination, and, in more instances than one, those who have entered the professional schools of Harvard and Yale have led their classes. The chief aim at Fisk, however, is not scholarship. Manhood is its goal. Christian men and women are its product. It is the purpose of the Faculty to send forth no one who is unworthy of confidence or incapacitated to be a leader of those who have never had the opportunities afforded at Fisk.

As looking toward this end Fisk University has not to any large extent adopted the elective system. It recognizes the fact that the student body has not the advantage of scholastic training in high grade preparatory schools, and does not come from homes where the



THE CLASS OF 1904 AND PROFS. TALLEY AND WATERMAN.

parents can decide upon the courses of study best adapted to their sons and daughters. The curriculum is, in the main, prescribed by the Faculty, and is arranged so as to give a well-balanced training such as will afford a secure foundation for professional study, particularly for the teacher.

Those College students who purpose to become teachers, moreover, have an opportunity in Junior year to take a course in Pedagogy and practice-teaching instead of German.

As the years go by the Normal Department is made stronger. It

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now covers five years instead of four, peculiar emphasis having been laid upon the study of English, and each year the examinations in this department are more rigid.

Drill under the eye of the principal of the Pedagogical school assists the young practice-teacher in handling classes and imparting instruction.

Quite naturally, the number of graduates in this department is fewer than when the requirements were less, but the fact that the Negro common school in the South constantly demands a higher



PEDAGOGICAL SCHOOL.

grade of teachers has determined the Faculty of Fisk to meet these demands.

The Music Department might be expected to be prominent at Fisk. The Jubilee Singers gave the school so wide and so enviable a reputation that applications come from all over the South to enter upon the study of music at Fisk.

It is the policy of the University to require of each music pupil the pursuit of two literary studies in addition to music. The theory



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The ministers educated at Fisk University are found in all evangelical denominations. They hold no second place in their churches. A writer in *The Outlook*, the son of its editor in-chief, after a careful study of church conditions in the South, wrote that he found no better organized church than one presided over by a graduate of Fisk, who was also an honor man at Yale Divinity School.

But perhaps the most pervasive and beneficent influence exerted by Fisk University has come through the refined Christian homes presided over by liberally-educated men and women. Quite naturally



INDUSTRIAL BUILDING AND GYMNASIUM.

Erected through a legacy by Mr. Howard, of Nashville, and gift of Deacon A. J. Burrell, of Oberlin, O.

those who are associated in college and school life form life alliances, and greatly does Fisk rejoice in a son whose rank as a scholar along sociological lines has world-wide recognition; in another who is dean of an important department in a well-known university; in others, who, as clergymen, have a large following and wield wide influence; in others who, as physicians, have a large practice, lucrative, and, what is far better, on a high moral plane; of others who have won success as lawyers; but even more than these are they who,

like the gifted wife of the Principal of Tuskegee, are at the head of Christian homes. In no other way than through such homes is the welfare of the Negro of America to be secured.

In the light of the life of the university it is not to be wondered at that a leading Southern gentleman, the pastor of the largest Southern Presbyterian church of Nashville, said, at the funeral of President Cravath, our first President, "If the spirit which breathed in President Cravath, lived in his work, and is represented by you who constitute Fisk University, obtained throughout the South and North, there would be no race question."



"AS GOOD AS NEW."

*FIISK UNIVERSITY AFTER THIRTY-NINE YEARS.*

Fisk has been maintained chiefly by the AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION, an organization supported by the Congregationalists, whose policy is thoroughly unsectarian and interdenominational. It is by means of this organization that nearly all the buildings have been erected and each year funds been granted to support the university. It has appropriated more than a million of dollars for the university.

Of late years the money received from tuition has increased, until it is now nearly enough to pay one quarter of the cost of the school department. The boarding department, with its nearly three hundred



A GRADUATES' SCHOOL.

boarders, is sufficient to pay for itself, and before the late rise in provisions afforded a slight revenue to the institution.

The incipient endowment adds slightly to the income of the school, but more than one-third of the expenses connected with the school must be solicited each year at the North. As at present managed, the university could be carried on independent of the American Missionary Association did it have an endowment of \$300,000. If the Association were released from the support of its oldest and largest institution, it would be able to devote more to its younger growing schools.

Were the salaries at Fisk equal to those paid for like work in similar institutions in the North, the above-named endowment would

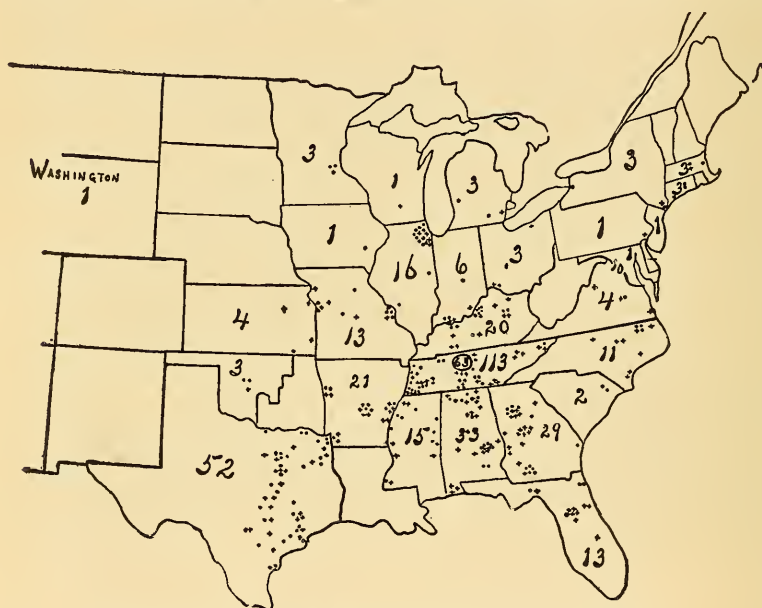


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at least be one-third too small, while a greatly needed enlargement of the work of the university would make an endowment of a million dollars none too large.

The Negro problem is the perplexing question of the hour. In the solution of this problem Fisk University has done a large share. A map of the United States dotted by the names of places where Fisk graduates are working is an interesting sociological study. They are found most densely congregated where they are most needed. The occupation of the graduates is significant.

Here it will be seen that the vocation which is most potent in



THE DOTS SHOW WHERE FISK GRADUATES ARE WORKING.

shaping communities is most often entered upon. It is estimated that from 15,000 to 20,000 colored youth are yearly taught by those who have received their equipment to teach at Fisk University. All through the Southland are schools typed, as far as it is possible so to do, after the alma mater that has given their ideals to the teachers of these schools both in city and country.

Of late a large number of the young men have become physicians or dentists and druggists. To scatter through the South, Christian men of high ideals in any or all of these vocations promises the best things possible for the people whom they serve—a promise which has had large fulfillment.

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course, those who are trained for college in the "Preparatory Department" fit into the college the better.

Quite naturally, the life of a student at Fisk is a very strenuous one. He is usually poor—often very poor. He works from October to the middle of June at his books and the tasks assigned him by the university. His vacation is, as one of the boys has said, a "workation." He is found as a porter on the sleeping or dining-car, a waiter at a summer resort, working at some trade that he has knowledge of, teaching school—in fact, anything that will afford him an honest penny. To secure these "jobs" he usually has to incur the expense of going North, as wages are exceeding low for unskilled labor in the South. For this reason many a time a student at Fisk does not see



STUDENTS AT MORNING CHAPEL EXERCISES, LIVINGSTONE HALL.

his parents for five, six, and even seven years, a hardship peculiarly trying to a race whose family ties are strong. Nothing is more delightful than the graduating days, when the pride of the parents, in view of the son's honor, is matched by the devoted attention of the child to parents who, in form and feature, are at so great a remove from the young graduate. The receptiveness and docility of the student body is a constant inspiration to the teacher. As in every school, there are those who are slow to learn, and not a few have to give up in despair before the course is finished. Many of these, however, remain long enough to catch the spirit of the institution and go out to do good work among their people. The university is dissatis-

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fied with its work unless each graduate has a distinct and avowed purpose to bless his race. The last Sunday before Commencement is Senior Sunday, and, almost without exception, each graduate tells of the plan he has formulated to carry out the underlying principle of the school, "Not to be ministered unto but to minister," and that other motto of the university, oftenest on the lips of President Cravath, "Overcome evil with good."

Dr. Washington Gladden, who was Commencement orator in 1903, after listening to the six representatives of a college class of twenty-two, wrote: "I believe in the absolute necessity of the higher educa-



COLLEGE Y. M. C. A.

tion for the Negro ; and I believe that the higher education which he receives should be the *highest* education—that the equipment which we give to the leaders of the Negro race should be the best possible. Their scholars should be good scholars ; their doctors should be just as well trained as white doctors ; their lawyers should know just as much law and just as much logic and just as much history and political science as white lawyers know ; their preachers should be men of power and their journalists men of breadth. The kind of men that Fisk is sending out will meet this demand, as I believe. I have certainly never heard a better Commencement programme in any college than the one I listened to last summer in Nashville."



*FISK UNIVERSITY AFTER THIRTY-NINE YEARS.*

entirely from the North. Graduates of Amherst, Ann Arbor, Carlton, Columbia, Dartmouth, Harvard, Holyoke, Oberlin, Smith, Syracuse, Wellesley, Wesleyan, Yale and other well-known colleges have been upon the Faculty. These teachers have, almost without exception, been actuated by a missionary and philanthropic spirit which has held subordinate the matter of emolument or the securing of renown. To shape character has been, with them, a higher aim than to train the intellect. To keep, at the highest point attainable, the intellectual life of the school is a goal never lost sight of during the nine and a half months of school year, but never day, nor night, is the moral and religious well-being of the student body ignored, the rather is it strenuously but lovingly sought after.



LIVINGSTONE HALL.

Of late there has been added to the Faculty a re-enforcement made up of Fisk's own graduates, men of ability and scholastic acquirements, who have made it evident that they possess the loftiest ideals of their alma mater.

The student body of Fisk comes from a score and a half of States. It is probably lighter in color than most Negro schools. Its dark-skinned students, however, often excel. Owing to the music department, the young women are slightly in excess of the young men in point of numbers. As the years go by the young people, more frequently than formerly, enter the advanced classes. The secondary schools in the South are doing better work year by year, although, of

that the training of the intellect is a *sine qua non* is true in music as in every other work.

The course laid down in the Music Department requires eight years of study. There are, as might be expected, very few who complete it. Those who do are in instant demand. Ten times as many as are here fitted for places would be readily and profitably employed. In connection with this department, recitals are given twice each month under the leadership of the head of the Department.

A choir of seventy-five voices has a weekly drill in sacred music for the use of public worship in the Sabbath services and the study of



COLLEGE CHOIR.

the works of the great masters. They have taken up the "Messiah," "Elijah," "Stabat Mater," "St. Paul," and for the last two years have done hard work in connection with Coleridge Taylor's "Hiawatha."

Nearly every year noted musicians from the North, at a nominal cost, afford the University the benefit of recitals upon the piano and organ. He is a dull pupil who spends much time in the musical atmosphere of Fisk University without rising above the frivolous, not to say degrading, music that is popular North as well as South.

The teaching force of the institution has in the past been almost





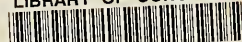
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